

**STOCKTON
HEATH
PARISH
COUNCIL**



Stockton Heath Parish Council Shopfront Design Guide

Stockton Heath Parish Council is committed to maintaining and improving the village's shopping area, and recognises that shopfronts play a key role in creating an attractive and vibrant area in which people want to live and visit.

Well-designed shopfronts and advertisements can have the potential to benefit our area in a variety of ways, but when poorly designed or positioned, they can be harmful and result in visual clutter, obstructions and even hazards.

Stockton Heath Parish Council encourages businesses to think carefully about their shopfronts and to promote high quality design standards across the village. We encourage anyone wishing to open a shop, make changes to their existing shop or place advertisements, to utilise this guide.

It includes information on

- Basic principles of good shopfront design
- Guidance on signage design
- Access for disabled
- What planning permissions and consents are needed for alterations to shopfronts and shop signage
- Appropriate security measures for shopfronts
- A summary of what to do

The principal function of any shopfront and associated signage is to advertise and display the goods and services provided within the building. The secondary role is to influence or improve the overall appearance and attractiveness of the Stockton Heath street scene.

Conservation areas like Stockton Heath are designated because they are recognised as having special architectural or historic interest that should be preserved or enhanced. There is a statutory requirement to have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area.

Frontage Design

Retain Original Fronts

Original surviving shopfronts (and pub and bank facades), should be retained wherever possible. Where it is proposed to replace a modernised shopfront on a

building, which is either listed or within a conservation area like Stockton Heath, Warrington Borough Council will request that the existence of concealed original features is investigated and information should inform the applicants submission. Similarly, surviving examples of first floor display windows should be retained.

The basic principle will be to relate the frontage design to the age and character of the building and to respect the character of the village.

Within conservation areas and on listed buildings like in Stockton Heath, Warrington Borough Council requires that shopfronts are fitted out in a manner incorporating the traditional design elements, done so as authentically as possible in regard to detailing and materials.

Elements of Shopfront Design

There is a set of basic design elements to contain the shopfront in much the same way as a picture frame contains its subject. These comprise of pilasters, fascia, cornice and stallriser. Each has its practical and visual function.

Pilasters contribute to the vertical emphasis of a building and provide support for the shop and upper floors. The pilaster projects only slightly from the wall, and has a base, a shaft, and a capital. Pilasters should be modelled and project beyond the plane of the shopfront and the upper floors. They should not be clad, treated separately on each side of the party line, or cluttered with fixtures such as signs, alarm boxes or blind fittings. In historic buildings pilasters should be treated in a manner sympathetic to the architectural style of the building and decorative mouldings should be copied from an original nearby shop.

The Fascia provides the space for advertising and is an area where there is opportunity to create a distinctive and individual style. Fascias should not extend beyond the pilasters and should not extend without a break over properties of dissimilar design. A gap should be retained between the bottom of the 1st floor windows and the top of the fascia/cornice. The fascia and other signage should contain the name and/or trade of the premises together with the street number of the premises and a telephone number. The lettering should be well spaced and cover a maximum of 3/4 the depth of the fascia. The colour scheme should complement the shop window frames. The lettering style should be simple and bold. Intermittent, flashing or moving displays will normally be unacceptable. Wholly-backlit fascias will also normally be unacceptable, as well as shiny, glossy, highly reflective and luminous colours and materials. If illumination of the fascia is required then this should be done by external means such as concealed top light tubes, or a carefully positioned spot. Large spots or swan necks will normally be unacceptable.

The Cornice should be retained to create a visual break but not obscure the original architectural detail. The Cornice provides weather protection to the top of the fascia and a strong visual definition to the shop front as a whole. It is usually dressed in lead and built up using several moulding sections to provide a deep projection. The cornice may be formed in masonry as an integral part of the building.

The Stallriser is the solid panel(s) below the shop window that can introduce a horizontal unity in the streetscene. They can also provide a visual base to the shopfront, bring displays of goods closer to the shopper and to protect the glazing from damage. The materials for stallrisers and upstands should respect the main building and shopfront. Acceptable materials include: timber, stonework, brickwork to match the upper facades, painted smooth render, slate, quarry, matt finish tiles, or good quality terracotta, faience or ceramics. In historic buildings, traditional stallrisers will normally be required in all shop premises. The base of the pilasters or existing traditional stallrisers in adjacent units should determine the height. A solid upstand of at least 150mm will be required. Stallrisers are an important role of shopfront security and may be panelled in wood, brick or stone.

The Glazing System of mullions, transoms and cills and the doorway itself are also important design elements. The mullions should be positioned to carry through the main vertical features of upper storeys. Traditional mullions were usually round in section and could be turned, carved and branched into curves for decorative effect. Surviving examples are worthy of preservation and reinstatement should be sought where there is evidence for them.



GOOD
DESIGN



BAD
DESIGN

Signage and Graphics

Advertisements are a key part of any shopfront design and they can have a significant impact on the character of our local area. They are also subject to separate regulations and depending on size, number, location and design, they may require advertisement control.

There are a number of types of advertisements which can be displayed upon business premises without the need for special consent, but the regulations are complex and early consultation with Warrington Borough Council is strongly recommended. All advertisement displays must be assessed by consideration of amenity and public safety.

SHOP SIGNS



A WELL PROPORTIONED
FASCIA EMPHASIZES
OTHER DETAILS.



LARGE FASCIAS OBSCURE
THE FIRST FLOOR
WINDOWS AND IMPORTANT
ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS



Advertisements are permitted to be displayed with deemed consent in conservation areas such as Stockton Heath. Advertisements on listed buildings will nearly always require listed building consent.

The Department of Communities and Local Government Guide 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide for Advertisers' is another useful source of information for applicants.

Illumination

Where fascia illumination is required on historic facades, discreetly positioned spotlights or concealed trough lighting beneath a cornice can be options, but rows of brass swan necked spotlights should be avoided. Historic buildings like public houses, may benefit from overall floodlighting schemes, but these will require specialist design. For modern buildings, the use of fully internally-illuminated fascias is rarely acceptable. Lettering-only illumination or halo lighting is preferred.

Illumination of appropriate hanging signs is normally only permitted if they include unobtrusively-sited spot or trough lights. Lettering types, signage and colours should be sympathetic to the age and character of the host building.

On older buildings, more muted colours such as dark greens, blues, reds and browns are preferred for fascia backgrounds, perhaps with cream or gold lettering trims and margins. Wherever possible, the lettering should form an integral part of the frontage design.

Access for Disabled

New shopfronts should accommodate the needs of disabled people. Steps should be avoided and doors should be capable of being opened by people in wheelchairs. The recessed entrances of traditional shopfronts can usefully accommodate ramps.

Ramps must be designed so as to respect the character of the building. If a building is listed, it may not always be possible to provide ramped access and therefore it is possible to apply some discretion with regard to applying the regulations in a thoughtful and innovative design. Only in exceptional circumstances should disabled people be obliged to ring a bell or wait to be escorted onto the premises.



Planning Permissions and Consents that may apply to Shopfronts

You need planning permission for any alterations or changes that materially affect the appearance of your shopfront. Most alterations to a shopfront require planning permission, for example you will need consent for:

- Replacing the whole shopfront or frame
- New fascia
- A-board
- Illuminated sign
- External security shutter and grilles
- Removing the stallriser
- New door
- Awnings and Canopies

Alterations to shopfronts will almost always require planning permission and may require consent under the advertisement regulations.

You may need planning permission to change the type of business carried out in your shop or premises (this is called a change of use). For example, you need planning permission to change the use into another non-retail use such as an estate agent, hotel, office, restaurant or takeaway.

Where listed buildings are involved, Warrington Borough Council is under a legal obligation to have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their features of special interest. Thus listed building consent will be required for any alterations externally or internally, which could affect the architectural or historic character or appearance of a listed building.

As such, the fitting of modern external roller shutter systems and the use of inappropriate modern materials and detailing is likely to be strongly opposed.

You do not need planning permission for repainting, reglazing or repairing a shopfront.

This is not an exhaustive list. When in doubt, please always consult Warrington Borough Council's planning department.

Types of Consent

Conservation Area Consent - You will need this to remove or demolish a shopfront in a conservation area like Stockton Heath.

Listed Building Consent - You will need this for any alteration to a shopfront which forms part of a statutorily listed building.

Advertisement Consent – You will need this for most illuminated signs, signs above ground floor level, or signs on a different wall from the shopfront, as well as flags, banners and pole signs.

Shopfront Security

Shopfront security should be an integral part of the design and not an add-on, so that proper consideration can be given to incorporating robust glazing systems, internal shutter boxes, and guides in an unobtrusive manner. Stallrisers and glazing can greatly strengthen security. Stallrisers can be reinforced internally with concrete and extend up within the window. The use of stallrisers also reduces the area of glazing and thus replacement costs in the event of damage.

Glazing

Large single sheet windows can be vulnerable to vandalism and are expensive to replace. Display windows can be divided up by mullions and transoms which can be reinforced by steel T sections disguised by wood mouldings, thus preserving a traditional appearance. In instances where historic glazing still exists, it should be retained in situ.

Security Shutters and Grills

The most contentious aspect of shopfront security is the installation of roller shutters. The proliferation of solid roller shutters conveys an image that an area is susceptible to damage, attracts graffiti and prevents window shopping. It can also jeopardise efforts to promote and diversify Stockton Heath's evening economy. Solid lath roller shutters with their horizontal emphasis, contrast with the scale and detailing of older buildings. Solid wooden shutters which can be lifted in and out each day could be appropriate in some circumstances.

Summary of Shopfront Security Considerations

The extent of security measures used by your business should be appropriate for the level of risk in Stockton Heath and should form an integral part of the shopfront design.

Strengthened stallrisers and glazing systems incorporating mullions and transoms can greatly improve shopfront security.

Any additional security devices should be positioned behind the glazing, whilst minimising any restriction of views into the shop, for example by the use of grills or shutters with transparent inserts or the perforated lath type.

Only where there is a demonstrable high level of security risk or vandalism will the council be willing to consider the use of externally fitted shutters.

They should conform to the following design criteria:

- Shutter boxes should be incorporated into the fascia design and not stand proud but any original blind box fittings could be reused.
- Shutters which allow light and visibility of the interior are preferable to solid lath types. Their scale should not dominate the shopfront and they should only cover the glazed area; where possible a vertical emphasis should be introduced.
- Graphics can be used to enliven the appearance of solid lath shutters. Plain galvanised finishes should be avoided.
- Finishes should be matt powder coated in colours which relate to the age and character of the building, such as bronze or dark green.
- Existing historic features should be repaired using traditional materials wherever possible.

Canopies and Blinds

Traditional canvas blinds are designed to protect goods from damage by sunlight and thus will not be necessary in narrow streets or north facing elevations. Where such blinds are considered necessary, Warrington Borough Council will accept them in historic areas provided that the blind box is inconspicuously sited within the fascia or cornice and they are retractable.

A summary of what to do

Decide to install or alter an existing shopfront

Appraise requirements and consult architect

Find out if consent is required; discuss initial ideas with the Development Control Office at Warrington Borough Council

Prepare design

Make planning application

Consider building regulations

Once planning consent is received, obtain tenders from builders

Install new shopfront/commence repairs or alteration of shopfront

Require further advice or information?

Please contact:

Stockton Heath Parish Council

Tel: 01925 210558

or visit the website – <http://parish.cheshire.gov.uk/stocktonheathpc>

Warrington Borough Council

Tel: 01925 443322

Or visit the website –

www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200557/planning_and_building_control

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